ABC NEWS - STS-3 LANDING (3-30-1982)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw8DFOdS-S0 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw8DFOdS-S0)

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From March 30th, 1982 ABC NEWS coverage of the Landing of STS-3, The 3rd Space Shuttle Landing. This was the only Space Shuttle mission to landing in New Mexico, as where all the other missions landed at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida or Edwards Air-Force Base in California

.STS-3 CREW:
Commander: Jack R. Lousma
Pilot: C. Gordon Fullerton

- Landing at 11:04:46 A.M E.T

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strip is ready for colombia less than five minutes from now columbia will enter the earth's atmosphere west of hawaii at an altitude of slightly more than four hundred thousand feet at that point the blackout will begin and it will last for about 15 minutes when they come out of the communications blackout they will already be over the continental united states after crossing the pacific coastline south of los angeles over baja california they'll be 34 miles high though and invisible actually they'll cross near the town of san vicente in mexico then they will pass just uh north of tucson arizona at an altitude of some 28 miles and a speed of about seven thousand miles per hour wow and fullerton will then head slightly northeast crossing the rio grande near truth or consequences new mexico and on into the white sands area and they will then probably make a short right turn to line up with runway 17 at white sands and will land to the south slightly southwest in all they will fly over more than 750 miles of mexico arizona and new mexico in just about 15 minutes time so they're really moving now the next important point in colombia's return the re-entry into the earth's atmosphere at 37 minutes after the hour just a few minutes from now everything is ready now at white sands and we go there now to lyncher and gene cernan lynn it would seem to be a bit more comfortable out there today isn't it yes it is frank somebody is doing something right uh there is a bit of wind as you can see but nothing like what we had yesterday that was an absolute sandstorm uh we felt it down here and as the astronauts and everybody else knows of course john young felt it up there when he went up to search the field gene cernan you were listening in on that conversation yesterday that was bad news john had to give him yesterday i think the space program was the hands of of mother nature but today we've got uh we've got control of it uh there's no turn around there's no wave off today they're on their way in we're looking out now though there's

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we're looking out now though there's some some dust kicking up over there that we went changes so quickly here lynn i think if we were here in about two hours waiting for the spacecraft to come in we might be waiting another day or two i think we're going to have the same day this afternoon that we had yesterday which as you say was near treacherous in fact but we'll get yesterday i'm sorry lynn that's okay frank i was just about to say yesterday started out worse than this uh and got much worse but we're starting out a little calmer and as gene says it is predicted to get uh a little worse there's yesterday right now you can see it that's the day we'll never forget i'll tell you there you see some of the some of the press people leaving this is our platform that we're sitting on now you can see what happened yesterday all of the technical people up here racing around trying to protect us behind us it was absolutely white you could not even see the runway we were wearing goggles to keep the sand out of our eyes what a difference it was gene that uh gypsum sand was in the air all over uh uh you couldn't see these mountains you can see behind us now obviously we're not visible yesterday uh john young made that last pass and uh he was what we call our effectively on instruments he literally couldn't see the runway himself because of poor visibility and was very disappointed himself how was he ever frank thank you lynn and thank you gene i must say we were all filled with admiration and sympathy for the ordeal you were enduring out there yesterday it really was rough to see everything flowing around like crazy and in any kind of a situation like this you have all sorts of papers scattered around and it is just impossible to keep anything really nailed down uh nasa had the alternative of uh bringing the uh columbia down at the kennedy space center in uh florida cape canaveral where there is of course a permanent landing strip which has not yet been used and that decision was not made until uh oh sometime this morning to actually come down at the white sand so of course we had our troops assembled at the kennedy space center you see the vehicle assembly building there and the landing strip and way up on top of the vab is our correspondent steve shepard who has had a nice trip to florida but apparently he's not going to have to do very much work steve well i can't say i'm all that disappointed frank although many of us

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disappointed frank although many of us down here would like to have seen the space shuttle land and i must say many of the nasa workers this morning that we talked to were hoping that the shuttle would get diverted from white sands and in fact make its first touchdown on the shuttle landing facility here at the the cape behind us is that shuttle landing facility seen from 525 feet above ground as you can see it's a big one about three miles long 15 000 feet 300 feet or 100 yards wide with some overrun at either end that facility will be used by shuttle orbiters in the future that is going to be the fairly permanent home landing spot for shuttle missions and it's going to be used on mission number five but the people here would like to have seen it used on mission number three weather here today is very pleasant there is a slight breeze uh it is gusting once in a while but certainly nothing like white sands yesterday the skies are quite clear temperatures warm and we're enjoying it okay steve thank you very much and of course there will be opportunities for the shuttle to come down at that kennedy landing strip in the future well they're about to enter the atmosphere and begin the communications blackout out over uh hawaii actually uh so uh nothing is going to be heard from the astronauts for some time our coverage of space shuttle columbia will continue in a moment we're back with our coverage of the landing of the space shuttle columbia and as you see from the graphic there that we have about 13 minutes to go before the astronauts emerge from the communications blackout which is caused by their entering the earth's atmosphere that started uh 37 minutes after the hour about two or three minutes ago and it lasts for a total of about 15 minutes this has been of course an eventful mission not only is it the longest uh that the space shuttle has ever had to achieve eight days actually uh when they come down it will be eight days no hours and five minutes so eight days and five minutes from the time they lifted off at the end of their 129th orbit it's had as we say quite a few little minor glitches here and there and a few uh not mishaps but

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and a few uh not mishaps but things that were unexpected jules bergman has prepared this report on just what the space shuttle has achieved on this mission here's jules the columbia flew the full seven-day mission longer than both past flights combined and accomplished 100 percent of its goals most important thermal testing how the shuttle and its systems reacted to both the heat and cold in space the shuttle's remote arm passed all its tests including lifting a payload from the cargo bay that measured the environment in space another major experiment separating cells electronically succeeded pointing the way for drug manufacture and zero gravity and the first student experiment flying moths and bees give us a look at how insects behave under weightlessness ironically the biggest problem for the shuttle test flight was down on the earth high winds and blowing sands brought a one-day delay in landing at white sands new mexico on board the spacecraft itself problems included a 75 failure in colombia's primary communication system the loss of 37 heat tiles during launch space sickness for both astronauts early in the flight a sticky latch on the payload bay doors the failure of two cameras canceling one experiment and a space toilet that never really worked properly so there were some difficulties but the mechanical arm built by canada that functioned it properly i heard a high government official the other night say that there might have been a problem with that because uh secretary of state hague wanted to program it so that every time they passed over the soviet union it would make shall we say a rude gesture but uh that of course was just a gag and uh didn't actually happen jules i want to ask you you're down there in houston the people at mission control really wanted to bring this bird back down to white sands didn't they oh yes frank they certainly did white sands was the only safe place on this third of four test flights so all in all nasa is proud of this test mission they overcame their problems and

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they overcame their problems and accomplished every mission objective flying nearly three and a half million miles nearly seven round trips to the moon nearly seven around round trips to the moon what are they doing right now jules as they uh well as they just had acquisition right mission control just had acquisition of signal just east of hawaii so they know the reentry and uh went well the burn went well and even before voice signal which we heard during uh my recorded piece they were getting good data from this from the columbia so they know uh the basic part of exiting from orbit and the uh blackout has gone well with us is dr shannon lucid uh astronaut herself who will fly this the uh columbia one day or one of the other shuttles shall we fly in the columbia well in the columbia right as a scientist shannon how do you feel oh i think this has been a fantastic mission and right now i'm just anxious to see them come back down and watch the landing all the problems on this test mission were overcame and as a matter of fact it was a good demonstration that nasa could have flown this mission operationally well and i think this mission showed the versatility of the nasa planning i mean we went on a day longer there was it made no big impact on anybody everybody was they had the people to support and they were able to do this planning and plan the extra orbits things like that it shows that i think that we've sort of matured i think an amused us uh or amused me was that an sts-2 the prior the previous flight they couldn't get it to stay up oh they're coming down now though they'll be on the ground shortly what kind of flight do you want to fly i'll fly anything that nasa will assign you to i'm not fussy you have any idea when hopefully sometimes in the next two or three years all right thank you dr lucid and we'll be anxiously awaiting your flight as i'm sure you are too uh one of the problems uh that occurred on this flight is uh

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on this flight is uh getting to be sort of familiar the loss of certain tiles there were 37 tiles or so that were lost apparently during the actual launch and ken kashuahara corresponded out at white sands has prepared a report on the significance of the tiles and just how important they are to the success of the mission here's ken they are cut and shaped and sprayed and baked and checked and rechecked and when the tiles are finally installed on the space shuttle they form a heat shield that prevents the astronauts from burning up there are more than thirty thousand tiles covering seventy percent of the orbiter's body when the shuttle re-enters the earth's atmosphere temperatures on the orbiter's surface will exceed 2300 degrees but because of the tiles the astronauts should not feel the heat at all the tiles begin as a fiber-like substance called silica made from common sand using a process similar to that used in making fiberglass after the silica is mixed with water it is compressed into a cube and carefully weighed and numbered then like space-age loaves of bread the silica is baked in an oven where the fibers are fused together and any moisture removed the silica begins to look like tiles at the cutting edge of what appears to be ordinary workshop tools but these are computer control for preciseness no two tiles are alike each has a shape and size dictated by its position on the shuttle's body and throughout its life each tile carries a pedigree of numbers and computer cards and documents if during stops at monitoring stations a tile is found defective other tiles cut from the same silica block can be traced and inspected as a demonstration of just how the tiles function this is a cube of silica which has been heated to more than 2000 degrees about the temperature during re-entry much of the heat is quickly radiated off the surface

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the surface and the rest remains trapped inside for hours so even though it's still glowing red hot i can safely pick up the substance with my hands because it's a poor conductor of heat the heat on the inside moves to the surface very slowly protecting the shuttle's skin as it is now protecting my fingers now be careful ken and we'll be going back to uh ken who was at the white sands enjoying the good weather there today the next important event now is the uh emergence from the communications blackout that will happen in about uh five minutes or well six minutes and uh 23 seconds from now so nothing really is happening nothing that we can actually report because the astronauts are still in this communications blackout as they move down through the earth's atmosphere our coverage of space shuttle columbia therefore will continue in a moment the action is taking place uh in the sky and in houston and at white sands new mexico where uh lynn shear and gene cernan are standing by waiting for the return of columbia the space shuttle one day late but apparently everything is going well the next important event is the emergence of the spacecraft and the astronauts from the communications blackout and that will happen at uh eight minutes before the hour look at the clock just about uh four minutes or so from uh now so i want to go back out now to uh white sands and to lyncher and gene cernan gene there is quite a bit of actual maneuvering uh banking and planing back and forth isn't there during this uh descent from earth orbit frank of course one of the more critical things is to dissipate the heat of re-entry during this period of time but it's also critical that uh that jack be flying the columbia back here to white sands he's doing a great deal of guidance if you will uh very much like an aircraft pilot would descend an airplane into a into kennedy or someplace but now gene let's uh let's try to get this straightened out about the automatic landing system is it the is the computer the the machine going to take over and actually bring it down to about 200 feet or so above the deck

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feet or so above the deck without a crosswind plan today he will uh be a combination of manual and auto right on through about sixteen thousand feet at sixteen thousand feet when he gets the the uh columbia actually lined up on the just about on the runway and and he's at the right altitude to right airspeed he'll give it back to the auto system and the auto system then we'll take it down to within about 200 feet which will give him enough time to then take over completely manually and land it but bringing it down to 200 feet uh it's really dropping like a rock too isn't it well that's why that's that sure is that's why if it were a crosswind landing he'd take over uh somewhat higher at 2500 feet uh so that he'd have more of a feel for the aircraft as it was uh as it was being bobbled around if you will by the wind gust and eventually when the shuttle becomes operational and the landings are made at cape kennedy it is supposed to be fully automatic is it is that not the case well theoretically and i think practically someday we're designing the the columbia to land with a complete overcast we won't have to worry nearly about uh the weather as we have in the past couple days it will uh always be useful to have a pilot along though won't it uh just in case uh it's necessary i i'm a little biased but i think we all feel that when we fly on any kind of airplane it's good to have a good pile along no matter how sophisticated our systems get i don't think you'd want to get in one of those things without somebody who can drive it ken kashawahara is there at white sands too and we want to go to him now he has some information about the runway it is runway 17. isn't it uh ken that they're going to come down down on it is indeed frank although as nasa said earlier they could make that change as late as right after blackout um the runways are all prepared as you may know they suffered the underruns and overruns suffered some minor damage during that sandstorm we had yesterday but that's all been repaired the excess sand on the runways have been cleared off the runways unlike those at edwards are made of out of this white gypsum sand which has been packed down and smoothed over and really they're as hard as concrete another difference is that the runways here about seven miles long at edwards

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here about seven miles long at edwards as you recall they were about five miles um the approach here will be slightly different frank they won't fly right over the field as they did at edwards but they'll come over those mountains in back of me and make that right turn to a touchdown on the desert floor okay mentioned earlier ken i'm sorry to interrupt you but we understand now that the they've come out of the blackout we want to go to houston perhaps we can hear the astronauts voices let's go to mission control jules have they actually a beautiful flying machine steve uh it's great to hear jack we show you passing mach 14 and 179 000 feet that was uh that's the problem we got the coast of california inside in fact we're about to go over la in about mark 16. frank you hear me yes i hear you it's fine we're all hearing last night that was astronaut capcom steve nagle talking to the commander of uh the columbia jack lousma i think we're booming right over the commander chiefs ranch right now steve we're going over santa barbara branches are nominal we show them crossing the coastline and high for our market 12. they must have great visibility if you said they could see the coast of california and on our mission control clock here frank they're 12 minutes and 43 seconds away from touchdown standby mark 12 000 feet per second that's moving right along jules what are we going to get the first glimpse of the uh spacecraft not for quite a while frank uh altitude 167 000 feet range 440 miles as you heard just now the columbia's

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as you heard just now the columbia's altitude is 167 000 feet and its range is 144 miles uh it's descending like a rock passing 362 000 feet which means it's very hard for our camera miles mark 10.6 what about the camera on anderson peak could that uh possibly be the first one to get a look at it uh at mach 10.6 uh shannon help me convert mark to miles well i'm not really sure what that one will pick it up or not but the chase planes took off we saw him on the mat on the monitor taking off and hopefully the chase planes will pick them up they'll try to get on board somewhere from about 35 000 feet on down 35 thousand feet will be the highest that the chase planes could get 50 miles to white train we have had in the past though pictures from uh from the anderson peak camera but i don't know whether that'll work today or not the previous missions they will not do a circle overhead they'll make a big right turn he's at 150 000 feet coming up from where we are at white sands from the southwest phoenix and he'll make a big right turn and we probably will not get the big boom sonic boom that we've had in the past uh when he passed right overhead and made a made a 360 degree circle to the landing this would be a right turn 140 7000 feet mach 8.3 range 290 miles mach 8.3 is still around four thousand forty five hundred miles an hour uh but the air density is increasing and mach of course functions right the molecular thickness of the air molecules frank this is lynn uh the pictures you saw before where the crowds lined up here at the press site those are all photographers and press people the public is a couple of miles away at a very different location

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a very different location maybe around 50 000 or so but all those people you saw before are just media [Applause] frank i imagine a first sight we might be here will be the contrails of the chase planes around forty thousand feet [Music] mark seven seven seven times seven times the speed of sound and they're only 230 miles away you know they'll get here pretty quick a lot of people disappointed that they're not going to see the big circle they won't get to see them overhead nearly as long as they would have if they'd made that that's right it's just suddenly going to appear there isn't it absolutely [Applause] what does that mean uh gene well it's a signal here from white sign thousand feet now it's it's a signal from white sands 186 miles oh they're locked right in then yeah and it gives them their range and distance from white sands it's typical of what we use on a lot of our a lot of our aircraft we should tell you frank it is very clear here now in arizona and new mexico blue skies well there are some scattered lights i guess what is that called well it's called stairs but just a light very high wispy clouds won't cause anybody any problem we're going to be able to see it as soon as it's in view and the weather here really is ideal now it seems like mother nature wants this bird to come home and she set the scene perfectly there's very very little dust blowing very little of the gypsum just a little bit off in the distance but it is crystal clear here control looks solid at 112 000 feet mach 5 range 146 miles well they're only 146 miles away from you now you better start looking up at the skyline we we are looking frank i promise not to fall off the platform this time

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fall off the platform this time yeah last time out there at edwards we nearly did both of us we've got gene's eyes trained up there he spots it first every time and frank there it looks like they're going for the landing without the crosswind they're going to go on 1-7 over new mexico now the wind is fairly down a runway but i believe they're probably concerned about north of silver city about the unpredictable gust the high gust if they were to try a crosswind well they're over your state now 103 000 feet at mach 4.3 range 100 would you like to be a hundred thousand feet over new mexico at uh at four times the speed of sound seven and a half minutes to touch them well if i knew that uh everything was waiting there at white sands as uh obviously it is uh i think it would be a very pleasant experience particularly if you've been in orbit for eight days you have no idea frank how very desolate this place is yes there are people waiting in trailers but there's not much else [Applause] i'll just leave it alone does it remind you of the moon passing 97 000 now positive seats frank if the wind were blowing on the moon uh i would have thought i was there yesterday believe me he kept remarking on that frank that this uh gypsum this very fine dust is like the lunar soil could use ejection seats if necessary they are not below away from touchdown our mission control clock here shows frank they they will be heading roughly from uh from south to north as we look to the west over here we have two chase planes uh probably at about forty thousand feet headed westward for the intercept out of ninety thousand feet at max free range seventy four [Applause] well if we're at miles 000 feet and descending that rapidly the chase planes ought to get a shot of them pretty soon i believe uh we were told we would have pictures by now foreign

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yes television picture of columbia on the monitors 79 000 feet mach 2.5 range 58 miles the chase planes we can still see are on an intercept i'm sure we'll pick up the shuttle visually in just a moment yeah we've got it now i think gene isn't that the shot on the t yeah we're looking with our own eyes though frank oh i see yeah but we're following we're actually facing the landing strip not the monitors don't bother to watch television we have a tv monitor uh here at mission control in what looks like a very steep rate of decision i would estimate over the field surface winds 180 at one one altimeter three zero zero three over almost runway one seven now you had a question frank i i see on the monitor it looks as though the nose is pointed up yeah the the weather is near uh perfect here frank as they come through 50 000 feet they'll deactivate their last little rocket jets before controlling their nose and their consequences crossed over and their weight position and now they uh they're actually using the controls uh as we use on an airplane the elevons uh the ailerons if you will in the uh elevators we're following the chase planes visually i expect we'll get a visual contact ourselves 1.4 i just love it when they say columbia crossed over i-25 crosses right over the interstate frank we do miss you out here you'd love it it just turned out yesterday's yesterday's uh efforts were all worth it it was an adventure frankly the chase planes are in a big right-hand circle we can see the white contrails and uh they are on an intercept now with

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and uh they are on an intercept now with the columbia gene there's i've got columbia see it right behind the contrail visually see the white dot good at mach one she's looking beautiful nine miles away from you you're nine miles nine miles away well there's plenty of time oh yeah we got a shot beautiful white picture the chase planes are intercepted perfectly they'll probably follow it down imagine we'll have a really good close shot but i'm just a reminder on the speed brake 100 okay i got them three minutes and 40 seconds away from touchdown a little hard to see now they're going through some clouds it's white on white glass at your monitor uh lynn we we can see it 0.9 and speed breaks going to 100 now frank one of the most important things he's doing here now is managing managing his energy he has two kinds of energy the energy uh based upon his altitude and any energy based upon his speed and he manages those most efficiently to get to his final destination here oh that's it so when you hear the word energy energy management without an engine is very critical is he still on automatic uh now we're ready i would imagine he at this point time is on manual control flying it manually uh and probably will not give it back to the automatic system until he's at sixteen thousand feet which will be almost on a straight in position to the runway thirty thousand feet there's a nice shot now everything looking good there's it it's coming right out of the clouds yep i've got it all right we're selecting the hack now passing 26 000 looks good oh i've got it beautiful two and a half minutes to touch down you know even though it's the same it is that white on white but it is gleaming against the clouds frank just gleaming look at this shot here it looks like banking right into it 20 000 feet frank as before we're beginning to feel the presence of colombia coming home yes and unlike when it went off there's

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yes and unlike when it went off there's no orange tank solid white with the black two minutes away starting to turn in from houston wins one night sonic boom sonic boom past this little far out big cheer here frank okay she's probably putting her on uh automatic now frankie final phase at fifteen thousand i'm sure he's on automatically okay airspeed go for auto to enter glideslope there is go for autographs will be coming right out of it okay we're in auto oh baby we'll be now in auto land of ten thousand feet one minute and thirty seconds and frank the wind is gone yes welcome home columbia roger boyd jackson all his glory now i wonder if this is the runway he was preparing for left 5000 feet even watching on television you get the impression as they come hurtling down frank guess where i'd like to be right now yes brady about three miles oh baby you've got good company gino joe she sure is pretty see but yeah he's playing right alongside roger look how small the chase plane looks that's the t-38 okay jackson he's now on manual he's over he's taken we're looking for the gear next look for the landing gear airspeed 292. come on maybe seven seconds away from touchdown there comes the gear you're coming here get it down [Music] [Applause]

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how do you like that they make it look so easy [Applause] a lot of pride here in new mexico frank these people have been waiting a long time for this supposed to land there when it took off [Music] what do you think lin well i think it's very nice i want to tell you i think it really looks like your lunar landscape here though with that beautiful ship coming in with the mountains there's absolutely nobody out there the way it was coming in we had nobody to take pictures of us doing this though no receiving party for you guys huh frank it it was equally or even more spectacular than the past that you know we said on the launch every time's the first time this was another one yes we're seeing it again here now with the videotape replay of them coming in at the moment of touchdown you notice how jack held the nose up and and he left it down a little bit pulls it back up that's the leg that was a beautiful job why did he let the wind break him a little well it's it's called aerodynamic braking he's letting the wind break him a little bit by putting as much of the planned form of the aircraft into the wing into the wind and that's just a normal way and it was just a little bit a little bit additional so it's parked a little bit additional flying on jack's part and and done extremely well frank if anything this was more exciting than the last time at edwards because it is so stark here uh somehow edwards has all those other buildings around

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buildings around we're going to have another look at it now as you see it uh coming in before they uh lower the landing gear it's great to see the mountains in the background there too oh boy it's a very different scene from what we saw before that landing gear to me i held my breath it's just from where i was looking it just didn't seem like it came out any too soon but that's the way it's planned he was right down on the deck really practically wasn't it before he uh lowered the gear he sure was now you'll see his nose come up he's got a downer win now that well it did come up there frank i've got to echo in just a little bit the columbia sits out there all by itself of course there's a few support vehicles around it but it's it's almost as if someone painted a picture out in the middle of the most remote place in this universe you could find and there sits columbia with the red white and blue on it it is an impressive site here's another angle of the landing look at this land from the side that's the angle we had of course frank that's exactly what we saw with the naked eye isn't that wonderful while we're watching this frank the convoy is now going around colombia that's of course the safing team they're going to make sure everything's okay we are told that the astronauts could appear within a half hour but may not for about 45 minutes we just don't know well it does take some time it uh always seems to take an inordinate amount of time to uh safe the vehicle as they say and uh wait quite a while before the astronauts emerge what's the big roar of applause out there frank craig we just got a flyby uh three of our t-38 uh in formation about 200 feet uh is a salute to uh to colombia i think the people here are going to cheer anything right now frank they are so excited this is uh as i say they've been waiting at the least a year to get white sands in use and after yesterday's disappointment they were sure they were going to miss it again but now they have it well we can see all the vehicles one

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well we can see all the vehicles one with the red cross uh marked heading on out toward the vehicle now toward the spacecraft they will uh of course they purge for any gases or anything like that there's a cooling uh process and also a fan the convoy commander there you see his vehicle will be uh right at the uh aimed right at the nose of the uh spacecraft tv2 i'm not quite sure what that does but uh they're going to look for titanic picture i suppose frank yes they are going to do some tile inspection they want to check and see uh about any damage to the tiles at this point they are afraid that this gypsum uh which is very abrasive might have done further damage and they want to they want to check and see how much is there oh i see well that would be important too wouldn't it uh i suppose there might have been a greater danger of tiles uh even if you know of being damaged yesterday if they had come down uh despite all that bad weather because everything was being kicked up so much well there might have been frank but you know as as we witnessed the launch here on this gypsum as fine as it is it's something i've never seen the likes of except on the surface of the moon we had a lot less dust after it touched down and we did it edwards there we seem to have a big smoke cloud in here it was really very quiet maybe it's because of the the the white and the sparkly color of the gypsum i don't know but it didn't seem uh to me like they kicked up much uh much of a path at all which might have had to do with them wetting it down last night and plowing dozing it down whatever they were doing well they had to get rid of a lot of the sand and everything that had piled up on it didn't they uh after yesterday's sandstorm we had sand dunes around here the only thing we needed was an ocean we could have we could have really enjoyed it we were thinking frank that if we'd stayed all night there would have been a lot of sand pile around us in this booth right here well the astronauts are going to be inside the spacecraft now for another 30 minutes or so while they're given a medical examination and all the other various procedures are followed to make sure that it is safe for them to leave the spacecraft

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leave the spacecraft as you can see a small army of vehicles moving in on the columbia right now as she's parked there right where she's supposed to be on the runway at white sands and the astronauts will remain inside for at least 30 minutes or so but because we know that you're anxious to have a look at them after this epic mission of uh eight days eight days four minutes 49 seconds to be precise uh we'll be coming back on the air when it is time for the astronauts to actually emerge from the spacecraft so that's it they're down they've landed safely at white sands new mexico right on time right at the appointed spot the weather was perfect they had no difficulty and it was once again a beautiful sight to see this huge spacecraft coming in after such a long long journey going off into orbit here's a replay of the spacecraft as it comes in escorted by those two t-38 chase planes bringing iran in we'll be back when the astronauts come out of the spacecraft that ends our coverage for right now this is frank reynolds for lynn shearer and gene cernan and jules bergman and dr shannon lucid in houston our thanks to them all and we'll see you again in about half an hour reach into space live coverage of america's third space shuttle mission has been a special events presentation of abc news the columbia the space shuttle has uh now just emerged there you see the two of them on the ground there shaking hands with some of the ground crew colonel jack lausma the commander and the pilot gordon fullerton who's the one uh facing the camera at this point they have just uh come out and uh lousma is now walking around to have a good look at the i suppose of the tiles and that is uh fullerton who is still standing back gazing off to the right they have just now come out uh they

[00:38:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw8DFOdS-S0&t=2280s)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw8DFOdS-S0&t=2280s)

they have just now come out uh they landed at uh five minutes after the hour so about 40 minutes after a touchdown uh everything has been secured and their egress as they say in the space business was permitted and they wasted no time in getting out now they're going to go around to the other side to have a look at it gene cernan and lynn sher are out there at the white sands missile range gene can you uh see them from where you are well we can't see them visually at this time frank we're looking at the monitor as you are but you know the walk around after you've flown an airplane is sort of traditional pilots and this is especially uh important to these two individuals frank we should also point out this is probably record time for the astronauts to come out of the columbia after they've landed you probably remember quite well john young being a little testy when he was in there he wanted to get out and they hadn't finished safing the vehicle so obviously the procedures have changed and of course they're anxious to see uh see how well they treated dear old columbia it's it's again a a big part of a pilot's pride to uh to treat his bird well and uh they're taking a good look at it let's uh let's have a look at uh another replay if we can of the landing about uh 40 minutes ago here they come in now it really was a spectacular sight particularly with the mountains there in the background well frank you know we we talked about landing straight into the wind rather than the crosswind because of the gusts i think if we watch very closely we'll watch jack put the nose down or the nose is starting to come down and what we talked about before is an aerodam aerodynamic influence the nose gear doesn't quite get down it goes pitches way up and out comes back down again and i i really believe now in looking at the film that that may very well been a result of a wind gust and uh more important that that gust is right down the runway than in a crosswind effect well you mean it may not have been his intention to do that that he may just have been surprised himself uh when that nose came up and had to control it just to get it back down i don't recall that happening on the

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i don't recall that happening on the previous two landings do you uh gene no and i don't recall in talking i talked to jack a couple weeks ago pretty much about the entirety of this mission and i don't recall that that was a plan of his in any way i think their plan was lower than those in a smooth fashion i'm convinced it probably was a gust that caught them and again we see the reason why we don't want a gust like that coming from from an angular position uh rather than right down the runway we should tell you also frank the wind has really picked up here ever since the landing there's a there is a bit more uh gypsum blowing around i don't think this would prevent a landing gene would it but it is a bit windier no but i'll also say they they did land right on the center line again that that runway there is a football field wide 300 feet wide so they it appears they've got a lot of room but again with a crosswind uh we we never really know and we hope we find out next time well they picked the right time to come down and you see there the crew of columbia the space shuttle colonel jack losema uh lasma and colonel uh gordon fullerton of the air force laos marine as gene said before pretty good landing for a marine they're down and they're they're getting on board the van now to take them uh take them back to uh headquarters whatever headquarters is out there in that vast wasteland and they'll be debriefed and eventually reunited with their families who are out there right now anyway that's the story the columbia space shuttle is down after a flight of eight days 129 orbits all is well and we'll have a complete report on this third successful mission and the landing today on abc's world news

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